

THE CLAIMS OF AGRICULTURE.

SPEECH

OF

HON. JQHN CAREY, OF OHIO.

Delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, April 27, 1860.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. BUFFINTON in the chair,) and having under consideration the bill to provide for the payment of outstanding Treasury notes, to authorize a loan, to regulate and fix the duties on imports, and for other purposes—

Mr. CAREY said :

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I avail myself of this opportunity of saying to the Committee what I intended to have said to the House a few days ago, and that, too, upon a new subject. There is one subject which we have been so much accustomed to hear discussed upon this floor, that I do not know but I may be considered out of order if I do not talk upon this negro question.

Mr. HATTON. You are certainly out of order if you attempt, in this Committee, to discuss anything except the negro question. Here, nothing is recognised as of sufficient importance to entitle it to consideration, unless it involves a disquisition on slavery. [Laughter.]

Mr. CAREY. I am going to make a few remarks upon a matter which I conceive to be of great importance to the agricultural interests of this country. I have no doubt that some gentlemen may consider that out of order; but I will venture to proceed, even if it is out of order; and, in order to lay a foundation for my remarks, I will offer a resolution to be read as a part of my argument, for I know it would not be in order to offer it now for adoption :

"Resolved, That the Committee on Agriculture be, and they are hereby, instructed to report to this House a bill for the promotion of the interest of agriculture, for the organization of the agricultural division of the Department of the Interior, now in a defective condition, and demanding an immediate remedy."

It is well known to every man upon this floor, who has reflected for one moment, that agriculture lies at the foundation of civilization, and of all other interests of the country.

It is the only institution of the country that has not some attention paid to it by the Government of the United States. Now, I find an illustration of the character of agriculture embodied in much better language than I can use, and I will adopt it as my own:

"EDUCATION OF THE AGRICULTURIST.—No man is so high as to be independent of the success of this great interest; no man is so low as not to be affected by its prosperity or decline. Agriculture feeds us; to a great degree, it clothes us; without it, we could not have manufactures, and we should not have commerce. These all stand together, like pillars in a cluster, the largest in the middle, and that largest is agriculture.

"The cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. Man may be civilized, in some degree, without great progress in manufactures, and with little commerce with his distant neighbors; but without cultivation of the earth, he is a roaming barbarian. When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization."

That is the language of Daniel Webster, and I think that no man will deny that that is a very fair and true statement. What condition and situation does agriculture maintain in the departments of the Government? It is placed under the direction of the Interior Department. It is only incidentally alluded to in the enumeration of the powers of the Secretary of the Interior. The head of the Patent Office is charged, among other things, with the collection of statistics, seeds, plants, and cuttings. So that this great interest is in the second class of the fourth bureau of the Department of the Interior; and so much of the time of the head of the Department is necessarily devoted to other branches of business, that little or no attention can be paid to the agricultural interest. There can be nothing effectual done

for it unless you place the subject under the direct control of some department that will be responsible to the country for its proper performance.

When the labor is divided among so many hands, the responsibility will be frittered away, and very little done. The resolution that has been read was directed by the Committee on Agriculture to be offered here, so as to get an expression of opinion on the subject, and suggest to the House whether it would instruct the committee to bring in a bill to establish an independent bureau of agriculture. I want gentlemen to reflect on the subject, so that, when the resolution can be offered in order, they will be able to vote intelligently on it. If they are disposed to encourage the institution of agriculture, they will vote for the resolution; if they are not so disposed, they will vote it down, and the thing ends; and we will let it remain where it is.

When the Government was organized, in the discussion on the subject the agricultural class was alluded to, especially by Mr. Madison, as the great class out of which members of Congress would be chosen, and therefore that that interest would be protected like all others. Now, you have in this body, I suppose, about a dozen farmers. The interest of no community will be attended to with punctuality and zeal, unless those in charge of it have a direct interest in the subject. The lawyer has his own interests to promote; the mechanic his; the doctor his; and if the interests of the farmer are to be promoted, that class must be represented by those who know something about its wants, its necessities, and its condition. We have now in Congress but very few farmers; and you find your agricultural interests in the Government committed to a clerk in one corner of the Patent Office, who peddles out seeds. That is about the extent of the care given to the great agricultural interests of the country. If you cannot do better than that, you had better abolish the office altogether, and leave the agricultural class to take care of themselves.

One great evil in the country is, that political offices are open to men, where they can get much higher wages than they can get on a farm; and it is a lamentable fact, that throughout the country where I am acquainted, and I believe it is generally so, agriculturists are now educating their children, not for the culture of the soil, but for something which they regard as more elevated. You find them seeking places in the professional classes of society, or you find them around your capitals of the States and of the United States, seeking employment, seeking the loans and fishes dispensed by the Government. That is a matter of great importance to the country. When a man gets from four to five dollars a day for doing little or nothing, and can only get a dollar a day for laboring on a farm, there must be injury done

to the agricultural interest. If you are to do anything to promote the interests of agriculture, you must get rid of a great deal of the political excitement in this Hall and in the country; for the very moment men find they can earn a living with less exertion in one direction than in another, and that one occupation is more lucrative than another, that moment their efforts are bent in that direction.

Such has been the case in reference to the profession of law; and we now have young men in Ohio—and I suppose there are such everywhere in the country—who, considering the study of law as a stepping-stone to promotion, have studied just enough law to give them the name of lawyers. Then they become politicians, go through the country making political speeches, and fill the country with a feverish state of excitement. In the next step of their progress they come into this Hall, and pursuing the same course of speech-making and creating excitement upon political topics, we who desire to get the floor for the consideration of matters of great public interest outside of politics, can rarely do so without a struggle almost as great as would be necessary to make a fortune ordinarily. [Laughter.] I do not wish to make any indecorous remarks in reference to this honorable body; but I have absolutely seen exhibited upon various occasions, in this hall, such a struggle for the floor, and such an effort to see who could talk loudest and longest, as, if exhibited in a neighborhood of farmers, would be considered not very respectable, to say the least of it.

Mr. Chairman, the interests of the country at this time demand, from the hands of every man who has any regard for his country or his country's welfare, a cessation of this extraordinary excitement upon the subject of politics. When you hear gentlemen upon this floor seriously talking about a dissolution of the Union; when you see a Convention of men of one single party of this Government dividing in reference to that question, so important to the institutions of our country, I think it is time that every one of us should begin to pause and reflect in reference to the consequences. It is not extraordinary patriotism that actuates men in making all this disturbance; and if it is, I am going to suggest a plan to get rid of at least one-half of this excess of patriotism, and to make the other half worth four times as much as it is now. [Laughter.] You will do much towards accomplishing that, if you will reduce the compensation of men in and around this Capitol, and in the various departments of Government, to somewhat of an equality with the compensation of men who pursue other vocations of life. Let not a man here who opens and shuts your doors receive three dollars a day, while a man who hauls rails gets but fifty cents or a dollar. If you employ here ten men to do the labor of one at home, and it becomes understood in the country that men can make more money here

that at home, you will find men rushing here from every quarter of the Union, seeking for office. And that is the very class of men who are disturbing the whole community. They come from the lowest to the highest ranks—from the constable up to the Presidential aspirant.

I ask you to compare the moral, social, and political condition of this country, with what it was thirty years ago. I am acquainted with the workings of this Government, and have been for a great many years. Over sixty years ago I went into the Western country, when that portion of it which now occupies five States northwest of the Ohio river contained but twenty-five or thirty thousand inhabitants. I have seen that mighty country grow up; and I have seen the physical, moral—I will not say the political—condition of that country improve, and become what it is now admitted to be—not excelled in these respects by any portion of this country.

New, there is not a gentleman upon this floor but will agree with me, that here is the source of all these abuses, and that it is just as plain as it is to multiply two by two. Pay men in proportion to their services, and make the pursuit of agriculture just as profitable as it is to open and shut these doors, and you will lessen this struggle for office. Pay your members of Congress just about half what you pay now, and you will have just as able members of Congress, and you will have a great deal less disturbance. Just in proportion as you increase the salaries of men, just in that proportion do you increase their extravagant modes of living. Office is then hunted for, and an excitement is gotten up by this scramble for office, which demoralizes the country and everything connected with it.

Now, I appeal to gentlemen upon this floor, if the people of the country could come here and witness what I have witnessed upon this floor, would they not be astonished at the spectacle? They would see one part of the House arrayed against the other, and at times, apparently, in the very attitude of war. And what is all this about? Why, it is all about the negro. That is, however, but a scape-goat. The negro has a great deal to do with this matter, but there are other controlling influences. And until these are driven out of the arena of conflict, and the people apply the remedy, you need not look for any great change. But we have great difficulty now in understanding what the Constitution means. We have side issues, and we have front and rear issues, and we cannot understand language at all as we did a few years ago.

All these things have resulted in the greatest excitement, and in what I must pronounce a most ridiculous state of things. I ask if these influences are not spreading all over the country? I ask you whether our action here corresponds with the expectations of our constitu-

ents? We are doing a great many things here which we would not like to let our constituents know. [Laughter.] And until gentlemen can meet on this floor, and meet as men meet elsewhere, and attend to their business faithfully and honestly, you will have just what you have seen here. The people will be deceived, and parties will war to the knife, and yet divide the spoils. When you offer to the man who performs what you consider your menial services about the Capitol, and in similar situations in the States, the same fair compensation that the farm laborer receives, you will effect a great improvement in all our public affairs. This disparity of compensation tends to elevate one class above another, and increases the extravagance of living of the better-compensated class; and that expense greatly exceeds what a man can, by honest industry, and by private efforts in the ordinary ways of life, earn.

Slavery is degrading to a white man who works; and for that reason I object to slavery going into a free territory. It degrades the white laborer. I do not ask that you will raise farming above what it now is. Let it stand upon its own merits, and let those who are here receive but the wages they get at home. That is all I ask. Unless there is something done to arrest the political excitements of the day, just so sure as we are alive we will become a distracted and severed people.

I consider an examination into these questions of great importance. We must put down the extravagance of the times. We see, every day, that expenses are increasing, and labor is becoming degraded. The farmer has now no ground for encouragement. He is merely regarded as a *farmer*.

Now, if you really do want to do anything for the great agricultural interest of the country, then let there be a separate department of the Government established for its benefit; and let some man be placed at its head who is competent for the discharge of the duties imposed upon him. Let that man be responsible to the country for the proper performance of his functions of office. As it is now, Secretary Thompson, of the Interior Department, has not the time to pay attention to the agriculture of the country. Governor Thomas, of the Patent Office, has not time to pay attention to it, and the subject is left to the head of another bureau; and if you inquire of him, he says that he has no control over it. [Laughter.] Let this evil be remedied, for agriculture is the foundation of the progress of all our other great interests.

Mr. Chairman, before I sit down, I will make a few remarks upon the topics of constant discussion in this Hall. It may be that my opinions may be desired by my constituents. Whatever they are, I hesitate not frankly to express them. Day after day have we had fierce discussions of every manner of distracting questions. Now, I think that if we would return to

the ancient construction of the Constitution—if we would construe it as it has been construed until within the last ten years—there would then be no further difficulty on the subject of slavery. In the early days of the Republic, slavery was regarded as an evil. In the organization of this Government, its mischievous tendencies were not concealed. At the time of the Revolution it was one of the complaints against the mother country, that she poured numbers of African slaves upon our coasts, and thereby degraded our white labor.

Mr. SMITH, of Virginia. I hope the gentleman will allow me to interrupt him, that I may say one word.

Mr. CAREY. I would rather go on without interruption, but I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SMITH, of Virginia. If, when gentlemen make statements like those we have heard, we remain silent, it will look as if we yielded our assent to them. I utterly repudiate and deny the proposition stated by the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. CAREY. I appeal to history in reply to the gentleman's disclaimer. If that be studied carefully, I am sure that it will bear me out in what I have said. I believe that I am familiar with the principles of this Government which had ascendancy until within a few years. I know, I think, what were the doctrines of Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Monroe. They were the doctrines, at the time, of all classes of the people.

I have on two occasions given expression by my vote, to my opinion on the subject which distracts this country. By my vote I have expressed my opposition to the extension of slavery. I do not believe that this Government has any power to extend slavery in this Union, upon this continent, or anywhere in the world. If it be said that the State sovereignties have the right to admit slavery within their midst, then I respond, that is a matter for the States, each by itself, to determine, and not for the Federal Government. We all know that Congress recognised the ordinance of 1787, which then excluded slavery from all the territories of the United States. The sixth section of that ordinance was repealed by the admission of the slave States South.

A good deal has been said about a resolution of my colleague, [Mr. BLAKE,] upon which a vote by yeas and nays was taken in the House. Now, sir, I voted for that resolution; I hoped that the subject would be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. The subject excited attention, and I had an idea of what the report of that committee would be, and I regret they were not allowed to report. If that committee had been allowed to make a report, I have not the least doubt that it would have had the effect to quiet this slavery excitement. I do not believe that, under the Constitution, we have any more right to touch slavery in the States where

it now is, than we have to interfere with the private property of our neighbors.

This slavery excitement increases every four years, as the Presidential election approaches. Now, Mr. Chairman, if men will appeal to their own judgments, and reason from common-sense rules, there will be less political disturbance than there has been. There would then be more probability of arriving at some more sensible conclusion on political questions.

We hear threats of a dissolution of the Union, because of this slavery agitation. The idea is extraordinary and unnatural. It is impossible that this people can be divided and this Union disrupted.

I was taught, from a boy, to venerate and regard this Union as the all-important thing in governmental affairs, and that separation would be a desolation. Now, supposing that, on the subject of this disturbing question of slavery, the South should secede, would it lessen these difficulties? We are now under obligations to surrender to them their slaves, and the great portion of the people are willing that it shall be done. We have some people who interfere with this thing. We have imprudent men at the North as well as at the South. But how is it possible to escape the consequences of these difficulties by separation? I know that men can swell themselves into a great deal of excitement and passion by exclamations about their constitutional rights. I believe, as much as I believe that I exist, that I have the constitutional right to demand that slavery shall not be extended. I know that it was the intention of the framers of the Government, and the design and expression of all the States, that they were, in a short time, to get rid of slavery. I know what all our great men have said on the subject; but the profound truths laid down by them are now regarded as heresies or as treason.

Now, I ask my Southern friends, in all candor—for I have not a particle of feeling against a single State or individual—to weigh these matters with a little more prudence than they are in the habit of doing; and I ask my own friends, when they discuss this question, to discuss it in a spirit of kindness and firmness. But we have got a notion recently that there is a kind of pluck necessary to be shown in every speech, otherwise we would be regarded as backing down. I do not think I lack pluck because I do not abuse my neighbor. Would any of you, in discussing difficulties with your neighbors, be influenced by the slang which is in use here—by the term “Black Republican”? If a member on either side of this House says an imprudent thing, it is seized upon by another, as if it were a fundamental principle of a party; and the people are excited by the belief that something very serious is approaching.

Now, if we would act like sensible men, and treat the subject with that candor and care which its importance demands, instead of that shyness

which we see manifested among members, we would see respectful greetings when we meet each other. Let me tell you, my friends—and I have had some experience—that the very moment the first blow is struck for separation, secession, or dissolution, that very moment will the grandeur and magnificence that have been portrayed in such glittering and glowing terms fade away, and we will become a ruined, broken-down, and destroyed nation.

Mr. REAGAN. The gentleman from Ohio has announced that there is no doubt that the original policy of the Government was to limit slavery to the States in which it existed. Now, it has occurred to me that a reference to the dates when Tennessee and Kentucky were admitted into the Union, and when Mississippi and Louisiana were created Territories, might perhaps deserve consideration from him, before he comes to the conclusion, which he seems to have come to very sincerely.

Mr. BINGHAM. If my colleague will allow me, I beg leave to remind the gentleman from Texas—

Mr. CAREY. I will answer the gentleman myself. I want the gentleman to know that I understand the history of the time. The Territory of Kentucky belonged to the State of Virginia, and slavery had extended there. It never belonged to the United States as a Territory. Neither did the others.

Mr. REAGAN. The Northwestern Territory belonged to Virginia also.

Mr. CAREY. Slavery did not exist there to any extent; and she ceded the Territory, with the condition that it should not exist there.

Mr. REAGAN. It is true that the cession of the Northwestern Territory was a matter of compact before the formation of the present Constitution; and it is also true that Kentucky was taken from the territory of Virginia, and Tennessee from the territory of North Carolina, after the Constitution was formed, and that slavery was permitted to exist in both; but the point to which my attention was called by the gentleman's remark was the statement that slavery was regarded by the fathers as an evil which must be limited to the States where it was existing. If that was their conviction, how was it, when they had the power to exclude slaveholding States from coming into the Union, that they admitted the States of Tennessee and Kentucky with slavery; and that, in providing for the Territorial Governments of Mississippi and Louisiana and Arkansas and Alabama and Florida and others, they expressly recognised slavery in those Territories, and made no attempt to abridge it in the States where it existed?

Mr. CAREY. The States from which these Territories were derived had already extended slavery over them, and they would not surrender them, unless that principle was yielded. That I understand to be the political history of that whole matter. In the case of Louisiana,

it was a treaty stipulation which could not be got over.

But, Mr. Chairman, I think it is too late in the day to begin to question the views which our fathers entertained on this subject. I have read the views of all the distinguished men of the United States on the subject of slavery. I have recently read all that Mr. Jefferson said on the subject. I have read his correspondence with A, B, and C, not only in the United States, but in foreign countries. He abhorred slavery, and believed that it would be abolished by the States themselves. I speak now of the time of the organization of the Government, and for many years after it; but I admit that Mr. Jefferson changed his opinion, somewhat after the Missouri question had awakened excitement in the country.

Mr. REAGAN. It has been declared here, by a number of speakers, that Mr. Jefferson and others regarded slavery as wrong in the abstract. There is, however, one fact in our history on this subject, to which attention has not been specifically directed by any of the speakers—

Mr. CAREY. I must proceed with my remarks. I know that this is an important question at this particular time, because upon it turns the propriety or impropriety of the course of all parties. In the view of the people at the time of the formation of the Government, there was no question more settled or fixed, than that slavery was a curse, and was not to be extended; and the Government disposed of that question, by providing that slavery should not exist in any portion of its territory. What stronger illustration of their views of slavery could they give than that?

My friends of the South have got a little too fast on this subject. I hope they will remain contented with their rights under the Constitution. I will guarantee that not one of those rights will be infringed upon. When they ask more than those rights, I believe they ask that which they will not get. I say this respectfully.

I know how easy it is for men to reason that this thing or that thing is expedient. I know that men call that thing expedient which they want. So it is when we pursue our filibustering policy. We do not stimulate filibuster expeditions because we have any peculiar love for the people of the countries against which those expeditions are directed. It is not that that actuates us, but a spirit of aggrandizement. When was it that a man was satisfied with his acquisitions, until he learned that he could add no more to the bulk of his fortunes? Does any Government relax in disposition to acquire new territory, as it increases in strength? No, sir; as it grows in strength, it seeks to grasp more territory. Such has been the history of the world. We are trying to make this a too magnificent Government. We seek to build up too much tawdry splendor in the Federal capital.

In Washington, what seductions are in this Hall, and out of it, to secure men in their fat places of emolument! Now, we will do well if we will go to work like honest men, and strike off the excrescences that affect the body politic. Let the hordes of servants and retainers, uselessly employed, be dismissed. If we do that, then we will do what is valuable. Just as you raise wages here, will they be raised elsewhere in the country for like services.

The States imitate exactly the example of the Federal Government. Four dollars a day do not pay a man's expenses, I am told. We hear it asserted that \$3,000 a year will not more than pay necessary expenses. I am credibly informed that some members expend \$6,000 and \$10,000 a year. They have the right to do that, for then they expend from their own private means. I will not intermeddle with the private rights of individuals; but when the Government is taxed for the purpose of exalting certain men above their fellows, I say that I have a right to object. There is no man in this country who feels more delighted than I do in its legitimate advancement in wealth and prosperity; but, sir, I fear luxury and enervation. I feel proud that I have lived to see a comparative wilderness, occupied by twenty-five thousand inhabitants, blossom into full-grown States, with a population of nine million. May I never live to see them sunken into an Asiatic degeneracy!

No man with a more swelling heart contemplates the growth of this country. I am fearful, however, that our people are too fast; and that unless they change their course they must rapidly degenerate. We do a great many things for which it would be difficult to find a power in the Constitution. A, B, and C, are hunted up, and money is squandered upon them. Relics of distinguished men who have gone before us are overburdened with national munificence. Yet we hear constantly much about the Constitution; such, however, is the technicality of the rules of this House, that it is impossible for a man to say no, let the question be ever so objectionable. Consider it. If you will not change these things, then I call upon the people to hurl every member from this House, and put in those who will restore the better days of the Republic.

Mr. Chairman, we are often designated as the servants of the people. Is it not curious that the servants live much better than the masters? Yet we make the people's politics, too often. We make them believe this and that, because they put confidence in us.

I confess that I am not accustomed to speaking in public. I know what I do. If I had the fluency of others, I would have a long story to tell. I have said what I have at the risk of criticism. I have endeavored to state plain and substantial truths. I do not believe, let me

say, that this Government will be crushed out. This Government will not now be dismembered. No, sir, my fear is that we will wear out; that our people will degenerate and become enervated and emasculated, as are the people of Asia, because of their debauchery and mode of living. There is no man acquainted with history who will not have the same fear. No Government that has preceded us ever had the same facilities of destruction. We have all the arts and sciences of former years, together with those unknown to the ancients. I must believe that we are unfortunately driving towards the brink of destruction. There is no hope but by retracing our steps, and again adopting the policy of our fathers. Where is the man, where the party, that will begin it? It must be begun if we are to be saved. Here is the place to begin it. Let us exhibit by our acts what we profess to be.

I will now, sir, say a few words to my particular friends. I am not ashamed of being a farmer—a laborer; I am proud that I have done my share of work. I despise the man who will declare that labor is disgraceful. It is blasphemy. God said that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. If I have ever done anything valuable, it has been the actual manual labor I have performed in assisting to develop a new country. I am proud to say it. I ask whether we have not here too many talkers? They are not laborers nor farmers. There are men who want to do all of the talking; at least, they want to lead in all the talking. Who can deny that? It is a lamentable truth. The evil has even extended to our boarding-houses. [Laughter.]

Why, sir, it would be impossible for a man, anywhere here in Washington, even among the ladies, to get out half a sentence without being interrupted. [Laughter.] This may be laughable; but it is as true as the other statements I have made. I ask these gentlemen, who are so flippant and smart, to reflect that every man here, by the Constitution of his country—and we are all Constitution-loving men—has just as many rights as they have.

Abstractly, there is not a man upon earth who really believes that he has a right to property in another man's labor. But a question of expediency comes in; and while gentlemen will talk about this matter, I ask these lawyers—and I have seen eight, ten, or twelve of them straggling for the floor at the same time—that they will reflect that others have an equal right to be heard, though they are crowded out by the severe straggle. It may be regarded as ridiculous to talk in this way, but I talk pretty much what I believe to be true; and if gentlemen will say it is not true, and prove it be not true, I am willing to retract. I know it may be called indecorous for a man of my age, and among these scientific gentlemen, to talk in this way, but I am impelled to it by facts which stare me in the face; and

there is not a man in the House who will not agree that what I say is true. Why, I have heard ladies say, "Is it possible that you do not behave yourselves better?" [Laughter.]

We occupy in this House an exalted position; and just in proportion as our position is exalted, and we do not come up to what that position requires of us, we are degraded. This leap year in politics is a very dangerous year [laughter] for this Government. I am not talking for Buncombe, for I shall never consent to be a member of Congress again; but so far as I have any influence among my constituents, I shall talk to them just as I do to you; and if they do not believe me, it will be their fault, and not mine; for I know, and you all know, that I tell the truth. I do not believe there is a man here who will get up and say that I am not speaking the truth. I will now yield the remainder of my time to my friend from Texas. I call him my friend, because I call every man in this House my friend, so long as he conducts himself in a gentlemanly manner. [Laughter.]

Mr. REAGAN. I do not wish to occupy much time. It is not material, perhaps, that I should say anything; but the observation I wished to submit is this: that the views of Jefferson and others of his day have been frequently presented in this House, to show that they were, in the abstract, opposed to slavery in their time. That proposition may be true; but to give a correct understanding of what seems to some gentlemen to be a change of conviction upon that subject, I desire to say, that some thirty or forty years ago, indeed within my recollection, very many of the people of the South believed that slavery was an evil; but that they had the institution among them, and could not get rid of it without inflict-

ing a greater evil upon the country. They were not able to send off their slaves, and it would not do to turn them loose among them.

Now, I wish to say, in that regard, that it is probable, if a crusade had not been instituted against the slaveholders; if they had not been denounced as wicked and cruel men for endorsing what many of them at the time did not consider abstractly right, I have no doubt that slavery would have been perpetuated; but that the condition of the slaves would have been ameliorated, as, indeed, it has been to some extent; but the amelioration of their condition has been arrested, to a considerable extent, by the action of men who would have precipitated their liberation, and who denounced and reviled the owners of the slaves. The attack made upon the slave owners brought into question the morality of slaveholding, the philosophy of slaveholding, the justice and policy of holding slaves; and necessity forced upon people who owned slaves the necessity of a thorough and full investigation of the whole subject, in its political, social, and moral bearing; into the mental capacity and moral power of the African race; their condition when left to themselves, and their relative condition when in subordination to a more intelligent race of men. The result of a most liberal and thorough investigation, followed out in all its details, has within thirty years worked out a great revolution in the minds of men, particularly in the country where the institution existed, in reverence to slavery; and the conviction is now thoroughly fixed in the mind of the people of the South, that there is not, abstractly, any sin in the holding of slaves; that there is no moral wrong in holding slaves; that there is no social or domestic inconvenience in holding slaves, as there was supposed to be thirty years ago.